process. Various economic reforms measures have been taken by the Government since 1991 aimed at accelerating economic growth, facilitating greater investment, enhancing competitive spirit, reducing level of poverty, generation enhanced employment opportunities, allowing higher private initiative and achieving great intergration with the world economy. Reforms have resulted in improved growth of the economy, a lower rate of inflation, an overall increase in flows of foreign direct investment, a significant improvement in the balance of payments position, accumulation of comfortable foreign exchange reserves and an all round improvement in the external debt indicators.

Economic reforms are meant to make Indian Industry efficient, cost effective and competitive. Therefore, these reforms will have positive impact on overall economic growth and employment in the medium and long run by way of encouraging efficiency, productivity and ensuring achievement of full growth potential.

Priority Sector Lending

*296. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 1992 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 10th December, 2002 and state:

(a) the total amount advanced by the Nationalized Banks during the last three years, year-wise and the percentage of this amount advanced to the priority sector during the same period; and

(b) the percentage of the amount earmarked for agricultural and other existing priority sectors as against the revised 'Priority Sector'?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) As reported by RBI, the aggregate net Bank credit and outstanding advances to priority sector of public sector Banks as on the last reporting Friday of March 2000, 2001 and 2002 are as under:

(Rupees Crore)

Last reporting Friday of	Net Bank credit (NBC)	Priority sector advances	% of priority sector advances to NBC
March 2000	292942.54	127807.14	43.63
March 2001	340887.93	146545.96	42.99
March 2002	396954.30	171185.26	43.12

(b) A target of 40 percent of net Bank credit has been stipulated for lending to priority sector by public sector Banks. Within this, sub-targets of 18 percent and 10 percent have been stipulated for lending to agriculture and the weaker sections respectively.

Distribution of Tista River Water

†*297. SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state the details of agreements reached in the meeting of Indo-Bangladesh Joint River Commission held recently in Dhaka regarding division of Tista river water?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI): Fifth Meeting of Joint Committee of Experts of Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission of sharing of Teesta waters and other common rivers between India and Bangladesh was held at Dhaka on 21st and 22nd Jan., 2003. The issues relating to (i) Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Joint Scientific Study on the availability and requirement of Teesta waters in both the countries, and (ii) Interim agreement for sharing of the Teesta waters between Bangladesh and India concurrently with the Joint Scientific Study, were discussed. Since there were difference of opinion between the two sides with regard to the above two issues, the Committee agreed to further discuss the same in its next meeting.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.